

AMERICORPS/AMERICORPS VISTA

INCLUSION OBJECTIVE

**Everybody can be great
because anybody can serve.**

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

AmeriCorps Welcomes Members Who May Have a Disability

An inclusive service environment welcomes all people, regardless of their disability. It recognizes and uses their skills and strengthens their abilities. An inclusive service environment is respectful, supportive, and equalizing. An inclusive service environment reaches out to and includes individuals with disabilities at all levels.

- Creating an Inclusive Environment: A Handbook for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities in National and Community Service Programs. 2004

AmeriCorps Welcomes Members Who May Have a Disability

“Qualified individuals with disabilities and those from diverse backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply. We provide reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals and conduct all activities in fully accessible settings.”

National Service Inclusion Objective:

Progress Report

On-site reviews

- accessibility
- consumer friendly
- outreach, recruitment materials

Building awareness

- Legislative Day
- Disability Expo
- AmeriCorps Project Director Orientation
- Arizona National Service Inclusion Team training
- AmeriCorps/AmeriCorps VISTA Share Fairs
- Orientation for One-Stop Center staff
- AzTAP conference
- National Service State Conference
- RSA Video Network presentation
- Independent Living Summit

Building awareness

Pending events:

- Transition Conference
- Arizona Transition Leadership Team
- National Service Community Forums
- RSA Video Network presentation (repeat)
- Sun Sounds

Product Development

- *All About AmeriCorps* (talking points for National Service presentations)
- *Building Inclusive National Service Organizations* (2 page adaptation of CNCS Inclusion Handbook with Arizona references)
- *Positions Open* flyer (a quarterly updated listed of positions open in AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps VISTA projects)

Product Development Con't

- *Directory of Disability Resources*
- Revision of *Reasonable Accommodations Policy*
- *Disability Awareness Training Resources*
- *Guidelines to Appropriate-Inappropriate interview questions.*
- *Accessibility Self-Assessment Guide*

Outcomes

- Increase in voluntary inquiries and requests for information and to participate with Inclusion Objective activities
- Increase in requests for information and technical assistance
- Increase in number of people with disabilities indicating interest in becoming AmeriCorps member/volunteer
- Increase in number of PWD becoming AmeriCorps member/volunteer. (Last count 18 applicants vs 13 in the previous year)
- Currently self-advocates assisting at least 3 PWD with application process)

Ted's Story

Ted's Story

Chapter One

Ted's Story story begins with the suggestion to him by a Division of Developmental Disabilities Support Coordinator that he apply to be an AmeriCorps member with Youth in Action AmeriCorps. The Support Coordinator had received a document entitled, "Positions Immediately Available in Arizona! Serve Your Country and Your Community" that has been distributed through the Arizona National and Community Service Inclusion Team.

Ted's Story

Chapter One Con't

Ted decided to apply for a quarter time membership slot. The process to finalize and place Ted took three months. Although this process took more time than we might have expected, we learned a lot about the disability services network in our community. We identified a site where Ted would be able to do the disability awareness work that is his first priority for service, and his AmeriCorps orientation was in early June. But a better way to start the story is to share a small part of the essay that Ted submitted as part of his AmeriCorps application:

“Why I Want to be an AmeriCorps Member- Motivational Statement.”

We are living in extremely difficult times in our nation today. Each and every day I see many Americans, especially those with disabilities being left behind. For nine years I have worked at Hozhoni Foundation, a non-profit foundation that serves people with developmental disabilities. My co-workers have been my greatest teachers. Many feel disconnected from mainstream America.

Motivational Statement Con't

My family discouraged me from applying [to AmeriCorps] because they feared that I would be assigned out-of-state, and had too many needs of my own. In the meantime I became involved as a disability advocate. It has been a joyous journey, and has afforded me many fabulous experiences. [Now] I hope to become an AmeriCorps volunteer and to make a difference in Flagstaff and beyond. By getting out in the world, I hope to break down barriers and change attitudes about disability. I believe all of our lives will be changed for the better.

Ted's Story Con't

Mobilizing Ted's Team is also a critical component to his service story. Ted's Team now includes: Ted, his family and personal caregivers, the Division of Developmental Disabilities, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, his Division of Developmental Disabilities Support Coordinator, his service/support providers from the Hozhoni Foundation, the Institute for Human Development, the Institute for Future Workforce Development and Youth in Action AmeriCorps. Ted's Team has been enthusiastic in its support of Ted's desire to serve his community through AmeriCorps.

Ted's Story: Chapter 2

On June 12, 2007 I officially began my AmeriCorps service. There are two words that come to mind in these first 100 hours. It takes a team and it feels like I was extremely busy it was hard to believe that honor now the first hundred hours has come and gone I had a full plate particularly in the very beginning through use an action has been incredibly patient. The reason I say it takes a team simply because for me to successfully complete 4500 hours of AmeriCorps service goes both ways not only do I as an AmeriCorps member get the full benefits of AmeriCorps. AmeriCorps kids to learn from me being involved in four from projects in a span of three hours a day three days a week is truly amazing.

Ted's Story: Chapter 2 Con't

All it takes is the will to modify the task not the person who knows what exciting story I will have the next hundred hours for part three

AmeriCorps members are trained for real jobs

Members and volunteers get training in

- job-related skills,
- social skills, and
- life skills.

Members learn

- teamwork,
- communication,
- responsibility, and
- other essential skills that will help for the rest of their life.

AmeriCorps members do real jobs

For instance, members:

- Support instructors in instruction and community outreach,
- Computer-center coordinators
- Help families complete applications for low cost health insurance,
- Coordinate healthy living seminars with diet and exercise,
- Forest restoration, trail maintenance,
- Outreach to neighborhood groups,
- Register people for library cards,
- Recruit and train community volunteers to tutor and read to both children and adults,
- Build houses,
- After school programs and individualized one-to-one mentoring,
- Connecting Baby Boomers & mentoring participants.

AmeriCorps positions can fit the schedules of people with disabilities

Positions are term limited and members work for specified periods of time, i.e. 1700 hrs, 900 hrs, 450 hrs. Terms can be what's best for the person.

AmeriCorps has new positions open every year

Positions immediately available in Arizona!
Serve your country in your community.
AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA:
**A pathway to training
and future employment.**

The Arizona National Service Inclusion Work Team

- Arizona Department of Education,
- Vocational Rehabilitation services,
- Independent Living Centers,
- Self-advocacy organizations,
- Technology Access Project,
- Institute for Human Development/NAU,
- The ARC,
- AmeriCorps projects and state officials
- Mental Health Association of Arizona

AmeriCorps members get supportive supervision

AmeriCorps staff understand the
meaning of people-first.

SUPERVISOR COMMENT

I have worked in the disability community for over two decades. But until now I did not realize the opportunities available for people with disabilities who want to contribute to their communities. It has also been exciting to see how National Service can offer opportunities for personal and professional growth for people with disabilities as they pursue educational and employment prospects.